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WASHINGTON THIRTY YEARS AGO*

The first of September, 1885, I landed at Waitsburg from Yreka, California. The railroad from Portland to San Francisco was not then finished and I came up the Sacramento with a freight wagon. Deer was plentiful then in Northern California and I met two four-horse teams loaded with deer hides.

The next morning after I landed in Waitsburg, I borrowed a horse from Rev. Joseph Alter, the first United Presbyterian minister in the Territory of Washington, and rode out north of Dayton to Covello where I secured a school. As I did not begin school for a week I found work with Albert Phillips on the Copei, hauling in corn that was husked by a band of Indians. Here I saw a new way of husking corn that will seem queer to corn growers. There were about two hundred Indian men and women. The corn near the coast does not open out when ripe like corn in the east, but the husks stick as fast to the ear as if glued on and the stub on which the ear grows is hard to break off. The bucks or men pulled the ears off the stalk and laid them in piles and the squaws took a large butcher knife and with one stroke cut the husk off close to the big end of the ear. It was a quick and easy way to get them off.

I boarded around teaching the Covello school. I had about forty pupils. They burned wood in the school and the teacher was expected to cut the wood. They hauled dead logs, long as telegraph poles, and the teacher cut them before and after school. Sometimes he would have to walk four or five miles to his boarding house after cutting wood for the next day. One evening when I got to my boarding place I found the sheriff there. He had arrested the woman who was accused by her brother-in-law of poisoning a horse valued at \$1,500. He took her to Dayton where the jail awaited her had she not secured bail. She was tried and acquitted.

They had a smallpox scare in the school and I had to close for a time. Those were the boom times for Dayton. As much as 50,000 bushels of wheat were sold there in one day. Teams sometimes came to town as early as 4 a. m. to get a chance to unload without waiting too long. Sometimes four-horse teams would run a race to see who would get in first. Sometimes a sack would fall off but they never

*Mr. Griffin, who is now manager of the Griffin Commission Company, at Stevenson on the Columbia river, has been recording his reminiscences. They were first published in a local paper, the Skamania County Pioneer, November 18, 1915, from which he sends them for reproduction in the Washington Historical Quarterly.—Editor.

stopped for a little thing like that. Wheat was twenty-five cents a bushel and flour was fifty cents for a fifty-pound sack of first class flour. Wages were good then and the common rate of interest eighteen per cent. Sometimes a man who had 10,000 bushels of wheat would find, after he had it all hauled off, that he had only a few dollars left. Wagons and machinery then cost nearly three times what they do now. Chickens were then two dollars per dozen in Walla Walla and they had to be dressed or you could not sell them at all. I remember seeing a row of empty oil cans about a rod apart from town out to the fort. I asked one man what they were for and he said the soldiers came to town and got drunk and couldn't find their way home without them.

There was only one railroad in Spokane and the city was not as large as Stevenson is now. There was only one wooden school house not as large as the grade building in Stevenson. Lizzie Halderman was county superintendent and principal of Spokane schools. There were sixty pupils and three teachers.

The best flour was fifty cents a sack and they were shipping two carloads a day to Rhode Island; that is one thing that was nearly on as large a scale then as now. There were lots of Indians in Spokane then and a large Indian who wore a high stove pipe hat and wanted to shake hands with everyone was Chief Joseph of the Nez Perce war. Indian ponies were plentiful and sometimes sold for two or three dollars each. Fort Spokane was seventy-five miles off and the supplies had to be hauled in freight wagon. Ore was hauled eighty miles from the old Dominion mine in sacks and shipped to Omaha. Freight on ore was eight dollars a ton from Spokane to Omaha. Pullman, where the agricultural college is, had one small store and livery stable. Mark Hopkins who was marshall of the territory later ran the Palouse Gazette at Colfax and I solicited ads for the book of marks and brands which he printed. Colfax then had three banks and did a big business in grain and agricultural implements. They had women's rights then and the women turned out in full force to vote the saloon down. About half the male teachers wore overalls in their school and at the county institute. Twelve years ago I again taught near Colfax and attended the institute and one lady remarked what a fine dressed body of teachers. But were they any better than those who helped make the great state what it is?

In many parts then more flax than wheat was grown and some thought the Palouse nothing but a stock country. They got all their apples from Walla Walla. They used small cayuse ponies to farm, many of them, and did not plow very deep. The average for the ter-

ritory was about fifteen bushels of wheat to the acre. Now it is nearly twice that much, as they farm better. Milk sold in Colfax for three cents a quart delivered. Now it is worth seven cents a quart. A good steer was worth about ten dollars, and some men who had three quarters of the best land, a homestead, a pre-emption and tree claim, 480 acres, found it hard to buy shoes for their children. Sometimes the hands on the threshing machines got so drunk on Sunday they had to wait till Tuesday for them to sober up before they could begin work.

JOHN A. GRIFFIN.